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ABSTRACT

Epistemic thought is a process that focuses on the origin of human knowledge. This paper describes inquiry-based leadership, a viewpoint that integrates epistemic thought with the realities of school administration. The paper examines the art of teacher inquiry and its link to Inquiry-Based Leadership (IBL), and presents a school-university collaboration model for participative research. The paper concludes that educational leadership involves the understanding of teacher research. The concept of change, the contribution to a knowledge base, and the direct improvement of student performance are vital notions of teacher inquiry. The use of IBL interfaces with teacher research and supports the fiscal and institutional decisions needed to effectively integrate the world of theory with the practical realm of school administration. Two figures are included. (Contains 27 references.) (LMI)

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The Integration of a Theoretical and Epistemological Leadership Style to the Practical Realm of School Administration: A discussion of Inquiry Based Leadership and the Development of a Research Based School

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Epistemic thought is a process that focuses on the origin of human knowledge. This process reflects both non-temporal and non-discursive patterns of behavior. This type of thought inherently presents, at the threshold of administration, a contradiction. Is it possible for a scholar/practitioner's world to exist? Can educational administration embrace the notion of epistemic thought and embrace the activities inherent in management ?

The notion of a deeper and more descriptive design of educational administration has been difficult to pursue since the institution of school[1] prohibits learning and subsequently intellection that is a vital part of inquiry. While not mutually exclusive, the theoretical and practical worlds of school administration have not found a sanctum within the walls of public schools. The school administrator is too involved in the practical application of duties. Because of this notion the union between the scholar and the practitioner has

[1] Broad based term used to describe the institution of learning as opposed to the art of learning.

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been, and will continue to be, difficult. Given these differences, can epistemic thought and leadership coexist within school administration?

The notion of inquiry is a notion that has been supported in teacher education for many years. Developing a deeper and more powerful intellect that would support the knowledge base of teacher education requires the explication of a deeper and more powerful form of inquiry (Joseph, 1987). The knowledge base of teacher education can, and should, require a deeper process of intellect. If we assume that teacher education should be supported by a strong and well developed knowledge base, and if we assume that leadership supports the idea of an equally strong knowledge base, then we support the notion that it is possible to integrate inquiry based leadership and administration.

Examing the notion of integration between leadership and administration takes a critical eye. Between Margaret Wheatley and her discussion of Chaos Theory (1992) and the organizational charts developed around the turn of the century (Taylor, 1914) lies a reality for educational organizations. Peter Senge supports the concept of leadership and the new science with his systems thinking (1990). However, the gap between Senge and Wheatley is a gap that precludes, if not outlaws, the integration between administration and leadership. Not devoid of outer form, and not devoid of a plethora of options for self development, the organization known as school can develop a new modality that excites the theoretical and scholarly while creating structure that enables administration to be effective in the new era of technology and technocracy.

The development of a new type of structure is a process that has been shared by many organizations. The sacred community embraces Theosophy which is a division of philosophy that seeks to develop insight into thought and revelation. Bolman and Deal (1995) say, "To recapture spirit, we need to relearn how to lead with soul. How to breathe new zest and buoyancy into life" (p.6). This type of organizational philosophy believes that leadership undergirds zest and organizational success. The connection between leadership and "organization" is a connection that can be developed and fostered through a successful commitment to a new notion of school leadership.

Inquiry Based Leadership

This new notion on the continuum of school leadership is known as Inquiry Based Leadership (IBL). This viewpoint integrates the epistemic thought of leadership and the desire to serve as an educational scholar to the real world of school (Figure A). The key component of IBL is housed in the field of inquiry. When leaders run schools they should embrace the notions of inquiry and servitude. Inquiry Based Leadership forces the school leader to embrace the notion of inquiry, develop school systems that reflect an integration between and among numerous component parts, and realize the organization of school is constantly changing and can produce parameters of success with IBL leadership.

Inquiry Based Leadership does not embrace the notion of prescription. The notion of prescription is situational and very seldom directed towards a deeper thought process. "Prescriptions are, thus, the fundamental units of

practical thinking just as propositions are the fundamental units of theoretical thinking" (Popp, 1978, p.282). This prescriptive form of thinking has provoked a conceptual understanding of the disparity between liberal and applied fields of study. Plato in fifth century BC Athens stated the world of "becoming" (dominated by objects, images, and shadows that are unreliable sources of understanding) needs to be differentiated from the world of 'being,' where genuine knowledge and wisdom may be discovered. Inquiry Based Leadership is a position that embraces inquiry and supports Popp's notion of proposition, not prescription.

The coexistence of prescriptive and propositional thought[2] has struggled to find support in the actual practice of administration. The practice of administration must be separated, for the essence of this discussion, from the purest form of leadership. This separation is important since a leader will encourage teachers to conduct inquiry and to develop practices that are supported by either applied or basic research. This by itself allows the organization of school to evolve and change based on the notion that teachers should control and develop their own educational practices.

Teachers and Research Based Schools

Teachers, however, are not encouraged to perform research, to think about contributing to a knowledge base from their own practice, nor rewarded for conducting inquiry by a school administrator. This simple, yet profound,

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[2] As defined by Popp.

example of school is rooted at the heart of a teacher's perception of administration. To change that perception and to develop critical pedagogy as a form of cultural politics, both the teacher and the student must be viewed as transformational intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). The school administrator does not embrace the concept of transformational intellect. In fact, the school administrator does not understand the need for teachers to be intellectual, and the school administrator does not embrace the reality of inquiry. The notion of inquiry, epistemic thought, and theoretical practice are not entrenched in either the training of or the practice of the job (Campbell, Corbally and Ramseyer, 1958).

Let us examine more closely the art of teacher inquiry and the connection to IBL. Since the administrator can be distinguished from the leader by a belief system that tends not to support the intellectual component of education, then the teacher is a passive participant in the practice of teaching. The teacher as researcher is a strong notion for the leader, and not for the administrator. Rooted at the base of teacher research must be a need to know. If we are to understand it well, this need to know must be integrated with the fear of knowing, with anxiety, and with the needs for safety and security (Maslow, 1968). Teachers, especially at the primary levels, have been relegated to "distributors" of knowledge and social conformity (Schaefer, 1967). Our schools should be staffed with scholar-teachers, and organized as centers of inquiry that foster a new tough-minded progressivism that is at the same time appropriate to contemporary needs (Cremin, 1961)

J. W. Getzels (1978) talks about the skepticism of educators in regards to research. Getzels argues the assertions that research has little bearing on the operation of schools is wrong. Educational research must be a vital component of educational practice. However, educational practice is slow to embrace even the more basic concepts of research. Administration is subjugated to the real world of every day practical problems (Getzels,1977). Administrators are prepared in a very basic management style that enforces, if not promotes, transactional teaching.[3] The purest form of leadership is then, if not by thought but by theory, built on the foundation of transformational pedagogy, and the discursive nature of epistemology[4].

The leader, unlike the administrator, is epistemic and supports teacher inquiry. The task of the philosopher in research is to provide pure, uncontaminated forms through the use of reason, insight, and concerted attention to higher order intellectual activity (Hamilton & Cairns, 1961). In other words, if basic research is to take place, then a deeper and more intellectual activity must take place. The desire to study the questions of nature, to think, and to inquire is the ultimate basic research and foundation for the epistemic leader. Research should celebrate thought, calculation and contemplation. The purest form of thought is indeed the key to leadership. This concept of

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[3] The notion of transformational teaching is one that supports the essence of teacher inquiry through the promotion of leadership that is servant oriented; dedicated to the support and encouragement of teachers to become inquirers.

The notion of transactional teaching is one of practical and prescriptive pedagogy where the teacher is not able, nor encouraged, to perform inquiry and develop an epistemic nature that makes the teacher a contributor to the knowledge base.

[4] The division of philosophy that investigates the nature and origin of knowledge.

leadership, rooted in the realm of inquiry and profoundly found between Senge and Whealtly, is the essence of leadership. While it is impossible to live in a chaotic system, since education is political and its borders are parametric, it is not impossible to move the educational system through freedom of thought and into the direction of progress.

Systems theory works and assumes integration. However, the school leader is forced into a more administrative function, since the development of systems theory is controlled by a more definite boundary. A preordained set of events and activities occur within the structure of each system that directs the system. While effective, the evolution of that system is limited. External parameters are ridged and force the development of strategic planning. This changes the system. It is harder to look at a system from within than it is from the outside. The strength of internal synergy is encapsulated within the system. The resolve: A leader that still interfaces with the reality of prescriptive administration. The feeling of direction is correlated to a much more practical world of product and process. However, the difference between this approach and IBL is significant.

Teachers who embrace inquiry as a way of developing new parametric boundaries, and leaders who see their function as servant and transformational, are able to redefine the boundaries from without, and still keep order in a system known as school. The organizational chart of an IBL system reflects an ever changing group of designs, interconnected patterns, and cognition with external and internal dynamics. However, a basic and fundamental process must be

incorporated to move teachers and leaders to embrace the Inquiry Based Leadership process. This process supports the notion of inquiry as a key component of school direction and bridges the gap between chaos and system dynamics.

Specifically, the development of a process of teacher inquiry must support the marriage between epistemic thought and school administration. At the base of IBL is this notion of teacher as researcher. Teachers, when given an opportunity to perform research or embrace creativity activities, choose creative activities (Oborn, 1996). This choice is at the root of administration, since teachers do not know how to perform research, and are not encouraged to do so. Each teacher who is encouraged to create change within the classroom is bound by the restraints of external boundaries and the total pressure of parametric restraints. Schools, today, do not provide a flexible environment for teachers to grow and change. Subsequently, school organizations struggle to move even marginally towards IBL.

Teacher research is critical to the instructional process. Most recently, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) discussed the results of 21 different teacher research projects. This current work enforces teacher research and "identifies and investigates a distinctive set of problems of practice that outside researchers can not address because they do not stand in the same relationship to the practice of teaching" (p. 120). The authors argue that research is more than just another process of accumulating knowledge. Teacher research is a way of creating social change and school restructuring (Cochran-Smith & Lytle,

1993). The impact of teacher research should always be felt in the classroom. Teacher research must impact students. Educational leaders should develop a workable process that encourages teacher research. A workable flow-chart for conducting teacher research should include four phases (see Figure B).

School-University Collaboration

Research can impact a learning organization and should be firmly rooted in a "burning desire"[5] that is enhanced by collaboration between school and university. An example of this process exists in practice.

The essence of collaboration between theory and practice can be displayed in a process that is diagrammed in flow-chart format (See Figure B). While this flow-chart resembles a precise and highly organizational model, it is intended to evolve and develop by use. The feedback arrows and the university connection enforce and enhance the ability for teachers, and subsequently districts, to conduct research that will enlighten the systems within the district and allow change to occur from without. The School-University Chart can be used by school districts and effectively stimulate research, create positive change, and reduce teacher disinterest (Oborn, 1996). This disinterest or apathy can be erased by the use of inquiry and research by the faculty and staff (Bogue, 1985).

Beginning the process of basic research is not always simple. In fact, and in most cases, basic research is perceived as difficult and not a practical

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[5] A burning desire is a notion that every teacher has a desire that, unless fulfilled, will produce anxiety. This burning desire is the foundation for IBL based research and allows the teacher to conduct inquiry that will produce personal satisfaction and system growth.

task for the classroom instructor. With the lack of training by colleges, and the lack of dedication by a school district, it is no wonder basic research is not conducted.

This "lack of training" can be addressed by the School-University Collaboration Model. Teachers can begin the process of inquiry through a systematic and directed process of instruction. The need to conduct basic, practical and collaborative research has been discussed by many authors, and the models and procedures are well documented (Sagor, 1992, Liberman & Miller, 1990, Rosenholtz, 1989).

Richard Sagor (1992) outlined very effectively a process for conducting collaborative action research. This process is a four step model that included problem formulation, data collection, data analysis, reporting of results, and action planning. Following models like this one can encourage action research.

Like collaborative action research the notion of basic research is a process of inquiry also. The process of basic research is descriptive. The process enforces the teachers need to question ideas and research desires for the pure sake of answering the question. No practical application is imposed on the process of basic inquiry (Popp, 1978). The desire to study the questions of nature, to think, and to inquire is the ultimate basic research (Hamilton & Cairns, 1961). If this basic research is to take place, then a deeper and more intellectual activity must take place. The process of basic research may evolve and develop from the activity of applied research, and arguably should develop there.

On a more practical level, basic research has effected school design by studying group process (Lewin, Lippitt & White, 1939). Open classrooms grew in popularity based on a basic study of the drive reduction paradigm (White, 1959). These examples, and others, that were discussed in Chapter Two . support the analysis made in this study, and the examples substantiate the need for basic research. The total lack of basic research in the TIG Program indicated the need to conduct such research. School leaders should react to the need, and they should implement programs which address basic research.

Basic, as well as action, research has had an impact on the disciplines. The effect of research on aesthetics, empirics, and symbolics has been dramatic. The different disciplines now call for research. In fact, the debates within varied disciplines call for active and rigorous inquiry. A concern for developing professional teachers who are reflective, able to engage in ongoing, classroom-based inquiry, and who are academically and emotionally sensitive practitioners has become an increasingly common one (Popkewitz, 1987; Smyth, 1987; Liston and Zeichner, 1987).

Educational leaders must develop a workable model that encourages teachers and trains teachers, to become researchers. Then, the leader must begin to emphasize basic research as a means of inquiry for a classroom teacher and enforce the notions inherent in the IBL design.

Teacher research and the encouragement of teachers to perform research is not a disconnected process. Teacher research is connected to a broader purpose, a purpose that involves systemic change and teacher directed

inquiry. This assertion implies that when teachers are further empowered, more reflective, and are researchers of their own discipline, they will be better teachers (Zeichner, 1993).

Conclusion

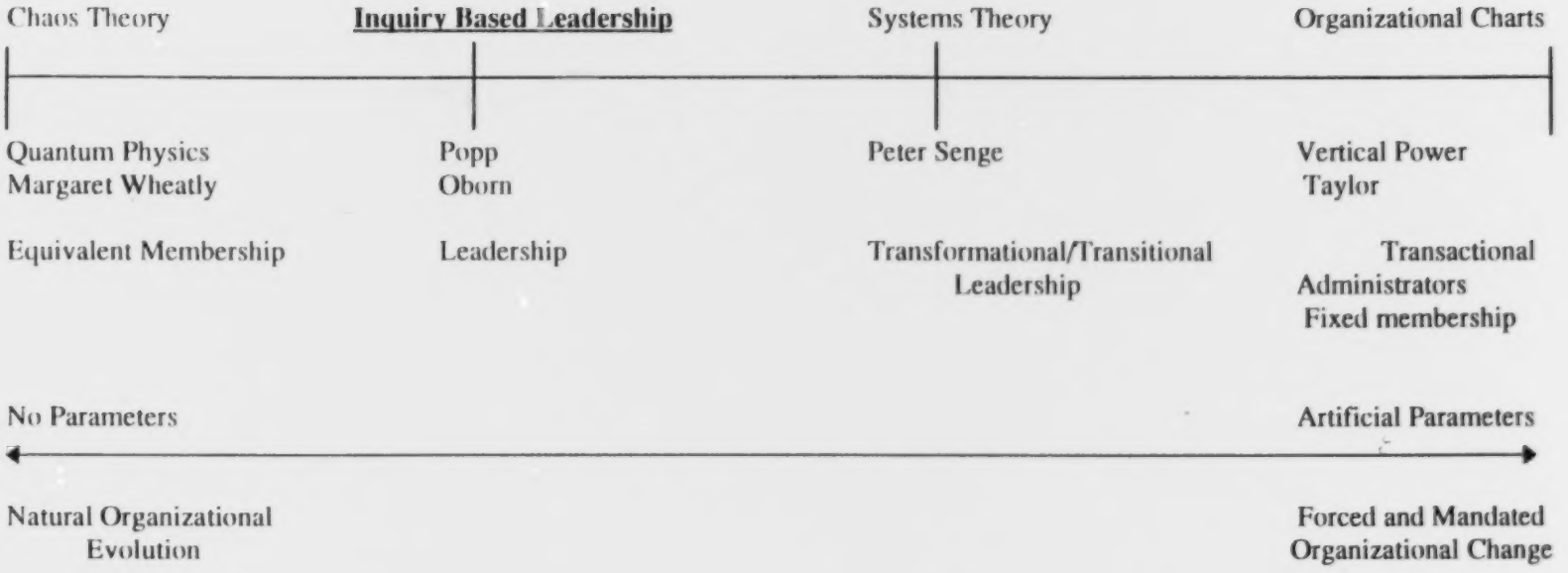
In the final analysis the need for teachers to perform research is critical. Teacher research is a way of knowing because it contributes both conceptual frameworks and important information about some of the central domains of the knowledge base (Lytle, Cochran & Smith, 1994). Inquiry Based Leadership is then an opportunity that allows districts to move, through a professional and epistemic commitment, that will effect education past the traditional walls seen by Senge and the organizational charts developed at the turn of the century. However, the essence of IBL stays to the right of Chaos Theory because it embraces the notion that a school system, while more "free" than described by Senge, does have boundaries. The school system is unable to tolerate quantum theory notions because of the political nature of the institution. Teacher research will allow, within the restrictions of the organization known as school, teachers and systems to develop from within and change and create dynamic designs.

Educational leadership involves the understanding of teacher research. The concept of change, the contribution to a knowledge base, and the direct improvement of student performance are vital notions of teacher inquiry. The use of Inquiry Based Leadership interfaces with teacher research and supports

the fiscal and institutional decisions needed to effectively integrate the world of theoretical with the practical realm of school administration.

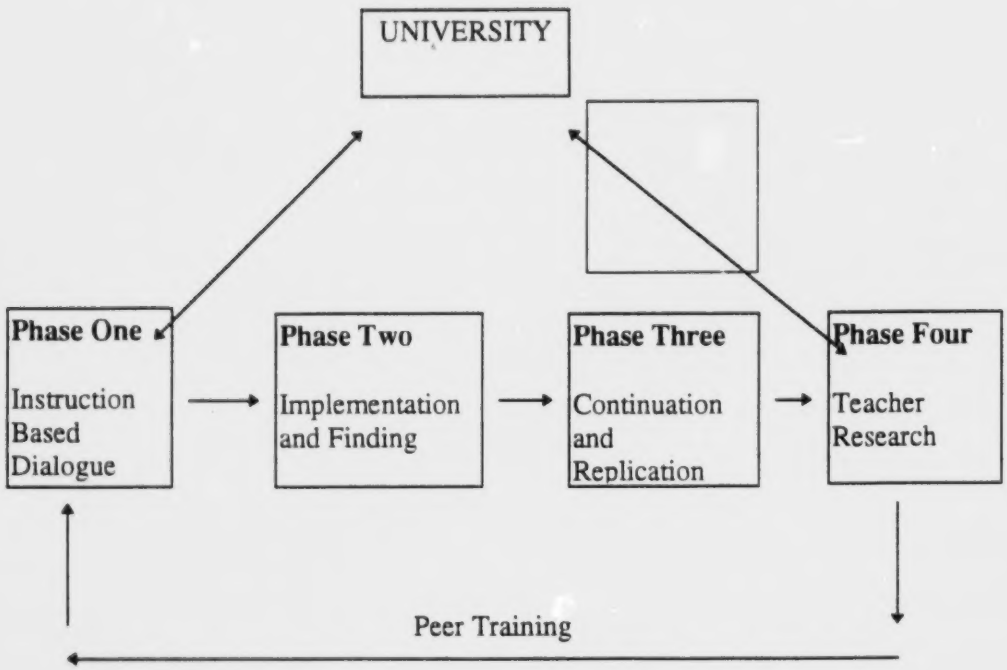
Figure A

Inquiry Based Leadership:
A Commitment to Natural Design With a
Reality of Institutional Restraints



Graph B

A Leader's Schematic for Fostering Teacher Research: The Ripley Flow-Chart



Note:

1. There was no attempt to confuse the professional development school model to this model of teacher inquiry. The professional school development model is more integrated and reaches beyond a research program.
2. If a research university is not close to a public school, a connection between a research faculty and the school can be made by scheduling consulting time with the faculty and personal meetings with teachers and the research faculty.
3. While the flow between phases appears as directional, the discussion between all parties is always multidirectional.

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